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N10 #485-75

3 March 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. E. H. Knoche  
Assistant to the Director

SUBJECT : "Damage Assessment" on the "Pentagon Papers"

1. The Acting Inspector General, on your behalf, has asked me to provide you (presumably for the Rockefeller Commission) a copy of the Agency's "damage assessment" on the "Pentagon Papers." I am not entirely clear what prompted this request or precisely what it is you want. In a sense, there is no such document and to understand what it is we do have, you need to know a little background.

2. The "Pentagon Papers" story broke in the Sunday edition of the New York Times on 13 June 1971. At that time, no one in the Agency had ever seen a full set of these documents. Consequently, we did not know the magnitude or precise nature of the leak involved. In the ensuing three weeks, the following events took place:

a. On Thursday, 24 June -- at the oral direction of the then DCI (Mr. Helms) -- I organized a small group of Agency officers who went to the State Department to look at the Pentagon Papers (State, by then, having been given a set) to assist in preparing an "exclusion list" for use by lawyers in the Justice Department in support of their request for a permanent injunction to follow a restraining order issued on 15 June. The hearings on the permanent injunction were to begin on Friday, 25 June. This Agency group included my then deputy (as SAVA).

[redacted] (then on the SAVA staff, now my Executive Assistant) and one or two others whose names I do not now remember. The State exercise -- more or less supervised by Mr. William Macomber (then Assistant Secretary for Administration, now Ambassador to Turkey) -- was quite disorganized and, indeed, very much of a Chinese fire drill. The exclusion lists were

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not particularly well prepared and the lists that were prepared were not particularly well handled by Mr. Macomber. On Saturday, 19 June, the U.S. District Judge had refused to enjoin the Times but the 2nd U.S. Court of Appeals immediately issued a restraining order to allow the government to appeal.

b. A day or two before (I am not precisely sure when) I had attended a meeting in the Pentagon chaired (to the best of my recollection) by Mr. Daniel Henkin, then Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. At that interagency meeting, each agency in the national security community was asked to review the entire collection of 46 volumes to determine what material therein was classified and would have an adverse impact if put into the public domain.

c. At the same time, there was a separate exercise going on in the Pentagon under the direction of J. Fred Buzhardt, then the Defense Department's General Counsel. I talked with Mr. Buzhardt, but to the best of my recollection we did not actively participate in that review, although Mr. Coffey, then Deputy Director for Support, attended several meetings.

d. On 30 June we (the Agency) received a complete set of the Pentagon Papers from the Defense Department. I assembled a task force of Agency officers who began reviewing them -- a process which involved having every volume read by at least two officers. This task was completed on or about 6 July and resulted in a looseleaf notebook, the original (and only copy) of which is in my possession. By the time this exercise was completed, the project of a consolidated, interagency damage assessment had been abandoned.

e. On 6 July (Tuesday), [ ] drafted a summary of the findings reflected in the notebook described above. On 7-8 July (Wednesday-Thursday), I reworked [ ] draft and expanded it somewhat. My efforts resulted in an 8 July blind memorandum (i.e., not addressed to any recipient) whose subject was "The 'Pentagon Papers.'"

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(We cannot locate a copy of [ ] initial draft, which we think was destroyed.)

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f. I wrote this somewhat expanded memorandum at Mr. Helms' request because he wanted a document surveying the problem which he could give to the chairmen (and possibly the members) of our Congressional oversight committees. He gave a copy to Congressman Mahon, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee (and of its CIA subcommittee) on Friday, 9 July. Our records do not reflect Mr. Helms having given it to any other members of Congress and I am not aware of his having done so.

3. What is attached is that 8 July memorandum, together with two transmittal notes: one to the General Counsel indicating that he also received a copy, the other to [ ] (then D/PPB). The latter transmittal note states that in passing the document to Chairman Mahon, Mr. Helms agreed that it could be read by other members of his CIA subcommittee and by the senior staff members thereof. The 13 August note to [ ] also indicates that a copy was given to the PFIAB.

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4. I believe the 8 July memorandum is the document you want, but three points should be borne in mind regarding this whole exercise:

a. It was done in considerable haste and what resulted was really a "first cut." As events developed Mr. Helms did not feel there was any need for further work on this project. Consequently, these rough initial assessments were never refined.

b. The notebook, which certainly can be reproduced for the Commission if the latter so desires, is an inherently misleading document, or at least one that readily lends itself to misinterpretation by being taken out of context. The officers on the crash task force were told to comb through the 46 "Pentagon Papers" volumes, note any reference to CIA and make a rough assessment of damage that might result from the disclosure of that particular item. They were told, in effect, to use a vacuum

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cleaner approach on this first cut. Consequently, many of the points they picked up are relatively trivial or relate to items where the damage is not particularly significant. No attempt was made in the preparation of the notebook to look at the damage possibly done by the work as a whole. It would, therefore, be misleading to consider the total damage as being nothing more than the sum of the individual items picked up from the notebook.

c. My 8 July memorandum is a little broader but it too was a quick cut at a preliminary assessment and not a final, considered, coordinated appraisal. It should, therefore, be read for what it was (and nothing more). In particular, it should not be regarded as a definitive "damage assessment."



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George A. Carver, Jr.  
Deputy for National Intelligence Officers

Attachment

O/D/DCI/NIO:GACarver/mee

Distribution

Orig - Addressee

1 - General Counsel

1 - Legislative Counsel

1 - A/IG

1 - AD/DCI/IC

1 - Rockefeller Commission file w/att ✓

1 - D/NIO Chrono w/att

1 - NIO/RI w/att

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13 Aug 78

[REDACTED] D/PPB

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GACarver, Jr.

1. Per our lunchtime conversation in July, attached for your information and use is a copy of a memorandum on the Pentagon papers prepared at the Director's behest. This memorandum was originally drafted for use with Congressman Mahon and a copy was given to him for perusal by the CIA Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee and the senior staff members thereof. A copy was also given to the PFIAB.

N.B.

2. The memorandum was fairly carefully drafted. The intent was to cover those points which ought to be treated but, at the same time, to present them in such a way that no damage would be done if this paper should fall into unfriendly hands. This double objective accounts for the rather elliptical or allusive way in which some of the topics are treated.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

"The 'Pentagon Papers'" - 8 July 1971

1- Pentagon Papers file  
1- Mac Khoud

13 July 1971

The General Counsel

GACarver, Jr.

Attached is the memorandum of which I spoke at our lunch on 13 July. It was drafted for the Director's use with our Congressional committees and a copy of it was in fact given to Chairman Mahon on Friday, 9 July.

George A. Carver, Jr.,  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

"The 'Pentagon Papers'"

- 1 - Pentagon Papers file
- 1 - GAC Chrono ✓

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| 2  |                            |                                  |                |
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| 4  |                            |                                  |                |
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| COMMENT  |                            | FILE                             | RETURN         |
| CONCURRENCE  |                            | INFORMATION                      | SIGNATURE      |
| Remarks:   |                            |                                  |                |
| <p>Attached is a package sent to Mr. Knoche on the "Pentagon Papers" prepared at his request.</p> <p>George A. Carver, Jr.<br/>D/DCI/NIO</p> <p>cc: OLC<br/>IG<br/>AD/DCI/IC</p> |                            |                                  |                |
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